

MICHIGAN LEgWORK

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH

AUGUST 2005

Students at Blind Training Center Explore a New World

By Susan Turney, Michigan Commission for the Blind

STUDENTS AT THE MICHIGAN COMMISSION
for the Blind Training Center in Kalamazoo are exploring a whole new world — and it's hanging on the wall outside the cafeteria. Kalamazoo artist Michael Donenfeld has spent the last two and a half years creating a three-foot by five-foot, 170-pound, bronze topographical map of the world. It has Braille labels, raised latitude and longitude, a notched equator, and other tactile features.

The map is a gift to the center, sponsored with \$24,000 in grants from the Michigan and Kalamazoo arts councils, the Kalamazoo Community Foundation and four private foundations.

Donenfeld has been teaching sculpture, pottery and drawing classes at the center nearly every Thursday evening since the 1980s. He got the idea for the project after watching several blind children, part of a group he hosted at his home, as they played with a plastic topographical map of the world.

This is the second large-scale project he's done for the center. The first was an eight-foot-square ceramic map of the state of Michigan that includes the life-cast faces of 22 former students who volunteered to participate in the project.

The nearly-complete world map hangs on the wall outside the cafeteria, a gathering place for study groups and evening activities as well as meals. It still needs some Braille country labels and an audio key, which will be added sometime in September, but the map is already getting daily use as students scan the outlines and mountain ranges of the continents.

Center Director Melody Lindsey, who is blind herself, said, "The first thing I did when I reached for the map was to find Florida. I grew up in Florida, and if I can find Florida, then I can find everything else. I really like this map because it gives students a better sense of where things are occurring in the world in relation to where they are. This will be especially useful when we're talking about current events in the news."

The Michigan Commission for the Blind Training Center is a residential training center for adults age 16 and older who are legally



This topographical map of the world at the Commission for the Blind Training Center in Kalamazoo was created by Michael Donenfeld, a Kalamazoo artist. The Himalayan Mountains, the world's highest, are an inch tall.

blind. Students learn "skills of blindness" with the goal of achieving independent living and/or employment. About 300 students receive training at the center annually.

The new map was the subject of a July 5 *Detroit Free Press* article by Susan Ager, which explains the sculpting, casting and finishing process in detail. See http://www.freep.com/features/living/ager5e_20050705.htm for the complete article.

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A Message from the Director

I was honored during the last week of July to be part of Gov. Granholm's investment mission to Japan to build stronger relationships with the leaders of Japan's automotive and new technology industries. Our Michigan delegation met with more than 150 representatives of business, higher education and government during the week — all with the goal of promoting Michigan as the premier state for advanced automotive, life sciences and high tech manufacturing investment.

The mission included individual meetings with senior-level executives from more than 20 Japanese companies. The Governor addressed an automotive industry seminar at the World Expo in Nagoya and hosted a life sciences seminar in Osaka with the presidents of Michigan State University, the University of Michigan and Wayne State University to promote Michigan as a North American center for life sciences research, development and commercialization.

Since the beginning of the mission — and as of this writing — the governor has announced a total of 10 Japanese business expansions in Michigan. DENSO's North American headquarters in Southfield plans a \$36 million expansion that will create 250 new jobs by 2010. Also, Tokai Rika has announced that it will invest \$50 million to expand its operations in Battle Creek, Jackson and Plymouth, creating 230 new jobs by 2009.

Eight additional companies have expressed their plans to invest and create new jobs in Michigan. They are Hitachi Automotive, Sekisui Chemical, Nippon Antenna, Nippon Piston Ring, Advanced Special Tools, Nakagawa Special Steel, Taiko Device Technologies and A&D Inc. These companies are expected to invest a total of approximately \$30 million and create more than 150 new Michigan jobs over the next several years.

All of this good news underscores once more that Michigan is the epicenter of North American automotive research, design and manufacturing.



James Epolito

Also of important note: The Michigan Economic Development Corp. (MEDC) has chosen James Epolito, president and CEO of the Accident Fund from 1995 to 2005, to serve as MEDC's new president and CEO. Jim is well known for turning the Accident Fund into an industry leader. During his tenure, he grew the business from a \$117 million single-state insurance provider to one serving businesses in 40 states and generating more than \$500 million annually. For the last four years, the Accident Fund has been rated among the Top 50 best-run insurance companies by Wards Financial. Jim previously headed the Blue Care Network-Health Central division of Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Michigan.

Current MEDC President and CEO Don Jakeway will lead the organization's international economic development efforts and high-profile events that include the Forbes CEO Conference on Mackinac Island in September and the Super Bowl in Detroit next February.

The MEDC board is expected to approve Jim Epolito's contract before he assumes his new post on September 1. We are excited to have Jim on board. Please be sure to give him a warm welcome.

Sincerely,

David C. Hollister

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Jimmy Carter Work Project

Habitat for Humanity Volunteers Received More Than They Gave

DLEG is proud to announce that 103 departmental employees devoted a day and, in some cases, the entire week during June 19–24 to building homes for Habitat for Humanity as Michigan hosted the 2005 Jimmy Carter Work Project (JCWP).

The project featured the building of 232 homes in 75 cities across the state. More than 650 state employees from 18 departments volunteered.

Habitat for Humanity partners with low-income families to build simple, decent homes. Families pay for their homes with no-profit mortgage payments that go into a revolving fund to help build even more homes.

Jim Kehrer, a local veterans' employment representative, Field Services Division, Bureau of Workforce Programs, was one of the DLEG volunteers. Here are some of Jim's recollections of the week he spent helping to build a house on High Street in Benton Harbor:

"Monday, June 20, 2005, 7:30 a.m. ... I look at the foundation, a pile of lumber and nearly 50 volunteers waiting to go to work. ... I think to myself, 'How is this disorganized group of people ever going to make a house out of this mess in less than a week?' The house leader, Doug Prentice, said the going will be slow this morning, but we will have work for everybody to do as the day goes on. Not willing to stand around, I volunteer to help set up the exterior walls. Our first project is to stand the gable walls. We stand the first wall, April Mobley, the homeowner, drives the first nail, everyone cheers, and then like an ant colony everyone starts pitching in. Before anyone knows what has happened, all the exterior walls are standing, the interior wall framing is going in place. I look around, my gosh, where did that bathtub come from? ...

"Today is day two. ... The whole crew arrives at the worksite at 7:30 a.m. Some have been here since daylight planning what tasks will need to be completed that day. ... All the volunteers have been fed; the kitchen crew starts at 4:30 a.m. preparing breakfast for the more than 1,700 volunteers that will work this day. ... By the end of this day the roof would be complete, the porch completed, except for the siding on the gable. ...

"As day three of the Jimmy Carter Work Project dawns, I expect that I will be painting all day. I dress appropriately. Little did I know, when working on the JCWP, you have to expect the unexpected. ...

There will be no painting this morning. The drywall crew left less than a half hour ago and they just completed the skim coat on the drywall. Painting will have to wait until after the skim coat dries. Today would be a day of learning new skills for me. One of the crew leaders asked for a volunteer to clean paintbrushes. Hey, it has got to be done, why not me? ...

"On Thursday the electricians again descended on the house to complete their portion of the project. ... Our team leader had

purchased some fish scale siding to put on the gable above the porch. It was painted burgundy to match the shutters; the front door also got painted burgundy as did the plaque that was affixed to the house with house numbers. Other little amenities were added to make April's house a home, like the beautiful redwood flower boxes that were custom built to fit the railing around April's front porch. ...

"Friday, the last day of the Jimmy Carter Work Project ... Today was the day for house pictures with the crew, the homeowner, President and Mrs. Carter, and other assorted dignitaries. ... Our house leader, Doug Prentice, was the first to speak. He told us a little about himself; he came to the U.S. from Canada as a teenager. He got drafted into the U.S. Army and served in Vietnam. He saw a few of his buddies get shot up and said that he has been pretty much a cynic since then. But, he then went on to say, 'This week has pretty much driven the cynicism out of me; I didn't know that there were people in the world like you folks.' All I can say is, I am glad I had dark glasses on. ... This group of strangers that gathered on Monday morning had now become more than just co-workers and friends; we are now family. It was real hard saying goodbye, because we knew that many of us will never, in this lifetime, meet again. At the closing ceremony, Jimmy Carter asked if we had received more than we had given this week. The resounding applause confirmed what he already knew. By the way, did I tell you we built a house, too? Thank you, April!"



Jim Kehrer (white shirt) met former President Jimmy Carter in June when Jim volunteered to spend a week helping to build a Habitat for Humanity house in Benton Harbor.



This past June, UIA staff helped to build Habitat for Humanity homes in Ypsilanti, including this one.

UIA Staff Hammer It Home for Habitat for Humanity

By Dorothy Holmes,
UIA Management
Services

A number of Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) employees picked up their hammers and saws to join Gov. Granholm and thousands of

other volunteers to support Habitat for Humanity during the week of June 19–24.

Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) seeks to eliminate poverty, housing and homelessness around the world. Building homes for the HFHI is not only a goal for the families, but a great accomplishment for those who volunteer to make dreams a reality for others.

Just ask UIA employees Kim Avery, Yolanda Beeks, Linda Caillouet, Debra Cheresko, Deanna Felton, Jill Hutchins, Cynthia Johnson-Williams, Joyce Mansfield, Dorothy Ruelle-Elliott, Margaret

Sadoff, Karen Shannon-Wilson, Darrell Steward, Colleen Vance and Cheryl Warren. These volunteers worked alongside professional builders, helping with such tasks as plumbing, painting and installing dry-wall.

Cheryl Warren, an analyst with UIA's Tax Office, prides herself as being a do-it-yourselfer and has completed numerous projects at her home and her mother's. She jumped at the chance to work on a Habitat for Humanity project, where she helped to frame and install basement windows. "It was hard work, but fun," Cheryl said, "and it gave me a chance to learn some more skills."

Cynthia Johnson-Williams with UIA's Center for Learning and Development worked on landscaping, moving loads of soil and mulch. Cynthia had a chance to work with two of the women who, with their families, will soon own and occupy two of the Habitat homes in Ypsilanti. "These women would not have been able to acquire homes such as these without the help and financial funding that Habitat for Humanity provides them," Cynthia noted.

Habitat projects allow ordinary people to become extra ordinary in their own way!



Terry discusses the work of the Reserve Officers Association as a guest on "Good Morning America."

Military News

Terry Fobbs Interviewed on 'Good Morning America'

Terry Fobbs, state policy administrator in DLEG's Executive Office, was interviewed by Diane Sawyer on the ABC television program "Good Morning America" on Wednesday, July 27. The purpose of the segment was to honor members of the Reserve Officers Association (ROA) who have been part of the U.S. military presence

provides input to policy decisions by senior Defense department officials."

Terry is president of the Michigan department of the ROA and serves on several key national committees.

"I was interviewed about ROA, its mission and purposes, and we talked about the sacrifices of families of members of reserve components who have been deployed," he said. "I was selected to participate because of my recent deployment experiences."

in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo and Bosnia.

"I was in New York for the annual convention of the Reserve Officers Association, which is chartered by Congress," Terry said. "ROA provides input for legislation regarding national security issues and other issues involving the reserve components and their families. It also



Terry with Diane Sawyer

Terry, who retired as a colonel from the U.S. Army Reserves this past June after serving for 30 years, was stationed in Kosovo last year, where he commanded a U.S. military area support group.

Professional Activities

The Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns (MCDC) and the Division on Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DODHH) are hosting an open house for DLEG employees and the general public from 3 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 8, in their new office suite in the Victor Bldg., 201 N. Washington Sq., Suite 150, Lansing. MCDC and DODHH are model offices for disability accessibility. Please watch for details about the open house in coming weeks on the DLEG intranet.

DLEG applauds four staff members who recently earned college degrees: **Antonia D. Brown**, an unemployment insurance examiner at the Detroit Remote Initial Claims Center, Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA), earned a master's degree in business administration from Baker College. **Juanita Mayes**, an unemployment insurance examiner in UIA's TRA/Special Programs Unit at Cadillac Place, Detroit, earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Baker College. **Linda M. Hunter**, an unemployment insurance analyst in the Benefit Procedures Unit, UIA, at Cadillac Place, received a bachelor's degree in Information Technology (E-Business) from the University of Phoenix. In addition, **Barry Simmonds**, with the Consultation, Education and Training Division, Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA), graduated from Siena Heights University in May with a double major in fire science technology and safety.

Ron Ross, a disabled veterans' outreach worker in Pontiac, and **Joe Swyrtek** veterans' employment specialist in Waterford, took their weekly radio show called "Veterans' Hour" (WPON 1460) to the VFW/American Legion Job Fair in Grand Rapids last month. Known over the airwaves as Cap'n Ron and G.I. Joe, the two were able to interview quite a few employers regarding the hiring of veterans. Ron and Joe work for the Field Services Division, Bureau of Workforce Programs.

July 26, 2005, was the 15th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the federal law that protects people with disabilities from discrimination in employment, services of state and local governments, public accommodations, transportation and telecommunications. At a celebration picnic hosted at Lansing's Potter Park by the Capital Area Center for Independent Living, **Patrick Cannon**, director of the Michigan Commission for the Blind and Gov. Granholm's disability policy advisor, spoke of the progress made under the ADA and the need to continue working to break down barriers that still exist.

Congratulations to **Joy Inniss-Johnson**, program development consultant with Michigan Rehabilitation Services, who was presented with the Silvio Sean Teyes Student of the Year Award at the annual training conference of the National Association for Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns, held in San Antonio, Texas, last month. Joy is a doctoral candidate at Wayne State University.



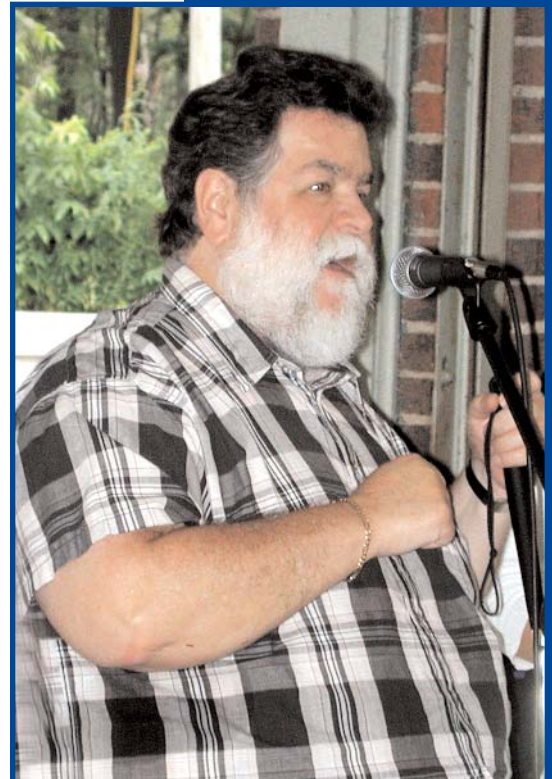
Antonia D. Brown



Juanita Mayes



Linda M. Hunter



Patrick Cannon on the 15th anniversary of the ADA.



Cap'n Ron and G.I. Joe field telephone calls at a Grand Rapids job fair.

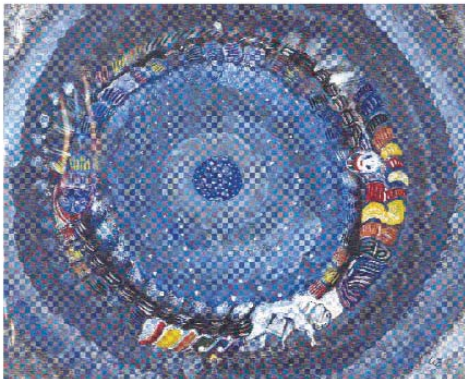
'Be Your Own Boss' Web Site Debuts

Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm announced the launch last month of a new website called "Be Your Own Boss" to help entrepreneurs start and expand their businesses in the state of Michigan. The website makes it easier for prospective and current business owners to find good information on all stages of business development, from a start-up to finding skilled workers and sources of financing. The site also makes it easier for businesses to understand which government regulations they may need to comply with and which licenses may be required. DLEG Director David C. Hollister said the state wanted to put a new virtual front door on information and services that can benefit small business owners and entrepreneurs: "Most people in Michigan work for companies with 20 or fewer employees, and we need to do everything we can to help this hardworking and innovative sector of our economy grow and prosper in Michigan." The site, at <http://www.michigan.gov/beyourownboss>, was built with the participation of DLEG staff, the Department of Information Technology, the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors, the Council for Labor & Economic Growth, the Michigan Economic Development Corp., the Small Business Association of Michigan, and the Michigan Small Business Technology Development Centers.



Poster Alerts Native Americans with Disabilities to MRS Assistance

Reaching Out
to serve
American Indians
with disabilities



The Fifth World of Peace
by Will Espey
The poster was created by Will Espey, a Native American artist from Boyne City, Michigan. The poster is a circular artwork featuring a central blue circle with a white dot in the middle, surrounded by a ring of colorful, stylized figures. The background is a textured blue and white pattern.

A poster featuring the artwork of Will Espey, a Native American artist from Boyne City, has been developed by Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) to alert Native Americans with disabilities to the job preparation and placement services offered by MRS.

"We are delighted to showcase the talent of Mr. Espey on our new Native American poster," said MRS Bureau Director Jaye N. Shamsiddeen. "His beautiful artwork will assist us in reaching out to Native Americans in

Michigan with disabilities who could benefit from our employment services."

A total of 1,000 copies of the 17" by 22" poster are being disseminated to community agencies throughout the state.

The poster was unveiled at a conference sponsored by MRS in June to help DLEG staff who assist people into jobs learn how to better serve Native Americans with disabilities.

Called "Walking in Two Worlds: Reaching Out to Serve American Indians with Disabilities," the event brought together Native Americans from three Michigan tribes and counselors from MRS and the Michigan Commission for the Blind and veterans' employment specialists from the Bureau of Workforce Programs.

For copies of the poster, please contact Paula Brzezinski at brzezinskkip@michigan.gov or (517) 335-5887.



Will Espey (left) signs his autograph on copies of the MRS poster at the June conference. Looking on, l. to r., are Veronika Peacetree, an MRS counselor in Gaylord; Tony Davis of the Odawa Tribe, Cleveland, who is working with the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians; and Carol Bergquist, director of Project Visions at the Hannahville Indian Community in Wilson.

Updated Training, New Opportunities in Electronics Are Available at MCTI

By Tim Shiery, MCTI Electronics Instructor

The electronics program at the Michigan Career & Technical Institute (MCTI) has traditionally focused on television and VCR repair. As the cost of these items has declined over the past 10 years, entry-level jobs have become less and less attractive as an employment outcome for our students. Students have been able to find employment outside of the TV servicing field, even though they were not specifically trained for that specialty area of electronics servicing. This is because the skills needed to fix a television are transferable skills to other areas of electronics servicing.

About five years ago, through the advice of our business advisory committee (BAC), we started developing and implementing training to prepare our students for employment as industrial electronics technicians. The typical job would be working in a factory repairing, wiring, installing and troubleshooting various types of industrial machinery.

We have acquired new industrial electronics trainers from Amatrol. These trainers and curriculum are currently in use at Kellogg Community College, General Motors, and Ford Motor Co. We have developed an articulation agreement with Kellogg Community College, and the students can receive college credit for the training they are taking here at MCTI.

Typically, the student will take a couple of terms of core electronics classes and then specialize in the industrial electronics curriculum. The

industrial curriculum is modularized so students can go as fast as they want to and take just the classes they need to obtain employment.

There is a demand for industrial electronics maintenance technicians in Michigan. Even though manufacturing jobs seem to be declining because of automation, there is still a demand to fix the machinery. Further, a lot of the current industrial maintenance technicians are over 50 and will be retiring soon. Starting wages are above average and there is tremendous potential for advancement.

If you would like more details about the program, please send an e-mail message to shieryt@michigan.gov or call (269) 664-9254.



Telecommunications/Broadcasting Is Option for MCTI Electronics Students

The Electronics Program at MCTI includes a Telecommunications/Broadcasting option for students seeking a career in the exciting fields of telephony, satellite communication, marine and aviation electronics, cellular, wireless networking, broadcasting, and alarm systems. Graduates of this program leave with impeccable credentials: the commercial FCC (Federal Communications Commission) license and NARTE (National Association of Radio and Telecommunication Engineers) and SBE (The Society of Broadcast Engineers, Inc.) certifications. Co-op, intern and job shadowing experiences are encouraged during the student's last term. The program is articulated with Grand Rapids Community College, which is further articulated with Ferris State University. If you have questions, please contact Phil Schmitt, M.A., national FCC test administrator at MCTI, at SchmittP@Michigan.gov or at (269) 664-9249.

State Police Canine Unit Is August Charity

The winning charity for August, based on our intranet polling, is the Michigan State Police Canine Unit. The suggestion for this charity was made by Mary Egner with the Fire Marshal's Office, Bureau of Construction Codes and Fire Safety.

Mary said that perhaps with our donations the unit could purchase another dog to go through canine recruit school. She said the dogs are used to find missing, fleeing and disoriented people as well as search for drugs and bombs.

Thanks to all of you "jeans wearers" whose donations to Ele's Place totaled \$1,307.00 for the month of July. This nonprofit organization in Lansing provides support for grieving children and their families.



People on the Move



A history buff, Mike Clear plans in his retirement to learn about the history of Chicago, where he and his wife Grace are moving to be closer to their two sons and their families.

The Center for Learning and Development (CLD) at the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) is losing its “beacon of light.” **Mike Clear**, a UIA trainer for the past 25 years, retired in June. Mike joined the Michigan Employment Security Commission (UIA’s predecessor) in 1970 as an employment service counselor. He later worked as job placement supervisor before becoming a trainer with the Commission’s Training Unit in 1980. **Dorothy Ruelle-Elliott**, CLD director, said Mike’s legacies are CESER (Center for Employment Security Education and Research) training and his system for evaluating agency training programs.

Best wishes to **Josie Gomez**, lead worker in UIA’s Lansing Problem Resolution Office, who retired July 31 after 26 years of state service. Josie aided customers who visited the office seeking help with unemployment claims or showed them

how to file their claims either by telephone or online. She started her career with the state’s unemployment insurance program as a counter worker and later worked as a claims examiner and lead worker. An active member of the Service Employees International Union, Josie was a union representative for over 20 years and served as a steward, chief steward, executive board member and bargaining team member.

Best wishes to **Ellen Hoover**, rehabilitation assistant with the Michigan Rehabilitation Services office in Port Huron, who has left the agency to accept the position of secretary to the vice president of the Nursing Department at Port Huron Hospital. Ellen had worked for the state of Michigan for 20 years.

Best of luck to **Rob Stacy**, occupational safety consultant, Consultation, Education, and Training (CET) Division, Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA), who has moved to Nevada to pursue some attractive job offers there and to be closer to his family. Rob had been with MIOSHA for eight years.

Congratulations to **Rodger Palm**, who has been named director of the Office of Trust Fund, Tax and Employer Compliance within the Unemployment Insurance Agency. Starting as an unemployment tax collector in 1980, Rodger has worked with the agency’s Automated Tax System, the Tax Office mainframe system and as manager of the Office of Finance, Tax and Special Projects. In 2003 he became director of the Tax Office and in 2004 was named acting director of the Office of Trust Fund, Tax and Employer Compliance, following the retirement of **Jackie Steed**. Rodger said among the top priorities for his area

are SUTA Dumping, implementing an Independent Contractors Unit and ensuring that employer needs are met in the agency’s new automated system rewrite.

Congratulations to **Jeannine Benedict**, policy specialist with the Bureau of Commercial Services, who has been promoted to administrative rules specialist in the Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs. Jeannine has been with state government for 27 years.

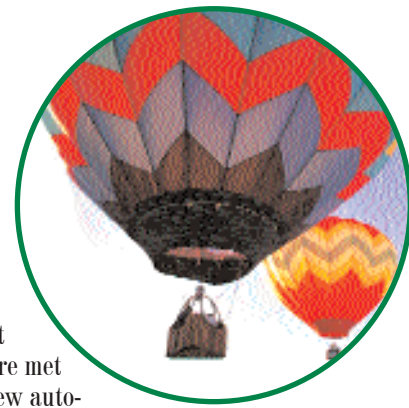
Congratulations to **Norene Lind**, who has received a promotion to administrative rules manager for the State Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules within DLEG. Norene was previously the regulatory affairs officer in the Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs. She has worked for the state for 19 years.

Congratulations to four MIOSHA employees who have been reallocated to higher-level positions. **Bill Shane**, CET Division, is now a senior safety officer 12. The General Industry Safety and Health Division has announced that **James Kivell** is now a senior safety officer 12; **Mark Pedo** is a senior industrial hygienist 12; and **Connie Murphy** is now a secretary E-9.

MIOSHA has welcomed **Richard Pfander** as its newest safety officer in the General Industry Safety and Health Division. Rick will be working in the Grand Traverse/Wexford/Manistee area.

The Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) has welcomed two new staff members. **Pam J. Jones** is the new secretary at the Saginaw office, and **Laura Schmeizer** is the new rehabilitation services coordinator at the MCB Training Center in Kalamazoo.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) is pleased to welcome 21 new secretaries across the state. In Clinton Township are **Joyce Papden** and **Janine Pelkey**; at the Grand Rapids office are **Laurie L. Stacey**, **Pam Young** and **Kelly Vos**; in Lansing are **Melissa Emmer**, **Amie Weber**, **Lisa Potter**, **Lillian Cordell**, **Catherine Hulett** and **Nicole Florence**. Also, **Rebecca Kelley** at the Michigan Career & Technical Institute, **Jennifer Husband** in Traverse City, **Laura Gould** in Bay City, **Natalie Ann Huber** in Saginaw, **Chrystal Jude** in Roseville, **Donna English** in Battle Creek, **Jeanene Green** in Jackson; and **Edwina Brook**, **Patrice Talbert** and **Phyllis Johnson** in Detroit. In addition, **Glenn Becker** and **Sharnelle Harvey** are new departmental technicians at the Central Office in Lansing.



Josie Gomez

We Get Letters ... and E-mails!

Yvonne Tucker, a lead worker at the Detroit Remote Initial Claims Center, Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA), received a complimentary letter from a caller who was having a problem with her unemployment claim. The customer wrote: "Yvonne represents the state of Michigan with enthusiasm, poise and compassion. Most of the time people will treat you badly when things happen out of your control, but I am truly grateful for the state of Michigan employing Yvonne Tucker. ... Yvonne is an outstanding individual with a professional passion about herself. I recommend that your organization acknowledge such an 'excellent' individual for such an outstanding job well done! Please let her know that I appreciated the way she handled me and my claim."

Rita Henderson, accounting assistant in UIA's Tax Office, was complimented for exceptional service in a recent letter from an Upper Peninsula employer. An incorrect mailing address was preventing the employer from receiving some important mailings from UIA. "Rita was very helpful in orchestrating the address change, even though it was evident that she was attending to other matters. I could not thank Rita enough for the quick turnaround and pleasant manner in which she conducted business."

Pat Laban, a lead worker in UIA's Employer Customer Relations office, recently received the praises of a third-party administrator who has extensive experience in working with the agency's tax and benefit programs. The administrator wrote: "Pat is by far the most helpful person I have ever dealt with at the UIA. Pat has been more willing to go out of his way to assist our company, on a number of issues. Every time I speak with Pat, he is extremely pleasant and helpful. ... Your agency is very lucky to have an employee like Pat Laban."

The following e-mail message from an unemployed worker in the Grand Rapids area, who had spoken by phone with staff at UIA's **Remote Initial Claims Center in Saginaw**, was forwarded to the agency by the Governor's office: "I would like someone to know that the employees of the unemployment department [Unemployment Insurance Agency] are probably the nicest and most helpful state employees that I have ever dealt with. I was told that I was speaking with the Saginaw office, but the Grand Rapids Michigan Works! department is very good as well. I hope this will be forwarded to them for the great job that they are doing for people who are often going through a very stressful time in their life."

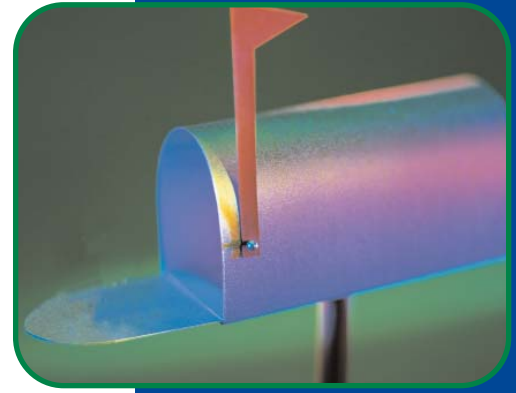
Paul Denean, manager of UIA's Employer Customer Relations and Multi-Claim Units, was complimented for his customer service and professionalism in the following e-mail message: "One of my reimbursing clients charged me with the task of deciphering

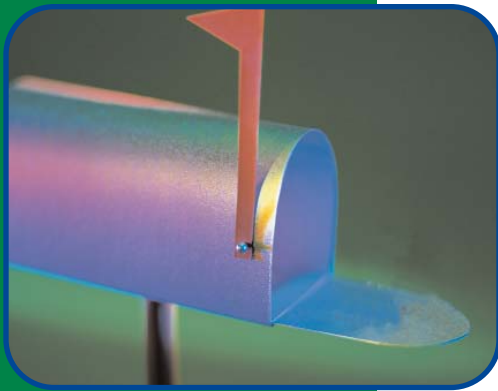
some language related to reasonable assurance regulations. ... Paul really provided me 'knock your socks off' service. He armed me with all the information I would need, not just the information related to the one question I asked. As a result of the information he provided me, I am sure to look like a hero to my client. Not only was he professional, Paul's passion for his position radiated through the phone. It was obvious to me that he loves his work. I truly appreciate Paul's excellent customer service. He certainly started my day off on a very positive note!"

An HR director recently wrote to compliment **Curtia Brown**, an unemployment claims examiner with UIA's Employer Customer Relations Unit. The HR director wrote that he was "lucky enough" to have Curtia take care of some problems that were related to unemployment claims. "She has been extremely helpful in resolving the problems by at least getting the paperwork process moving, even if the end result is not to our favor. ... She always maintains a high level of professionalism, which is exemplary. We are asking you to initiate whatever steps your organization takes in recognizing someone who goes above and beyond."

This letter was sent to the Wage and Hour Division by Heather M. Surbrook with the Sykora Law Office, Sandusky: "I would like to commend your office for hiring such a wonderful employee. I just shared a very informative and friendly conversation with **John L. Stadel**, senior investigator. He responded promptly with his very busy schedule. I am now able to respond to our client with an update. Even with all of his files that came before our current matter, he was willing to pull up his file, review it with me, and answer any questions that I had without making me feel rushed. What an asset to your company! Thank you, Mr. Stadel, I am very appreciative!"

Dr. Marlene Caroselli, Center for Professional Development, Rochester, N.Y., teaches classes offered by the Michigan Department of Civil Service. She recently sent this letter to DLEG Director **David C. Hollister**: "I've come to expect an eagerness-to-learn in the employees/students who attend my classes. Your employee **Audrey Feldpausch** [Office of Financial and Insurance Services], however, goes far beyond my expectations. In our recent 'Effective Business Writing' class, she volunteered to share her answers to an exercise dealing with the use of subject-case pronouns and object-case pronouns. She answered every question correctly. In addition to grammatical perfection, she displayed both courage and self-confidence in offering to review her answers for the class. Please join me in recognizing Audrey for her intellectual prowess and for her leadership traits. I like to give out books to students who





More Letters ... and E-mails!

have done especially well with the most challenging assignments. By the end of the day, I realized that four of the five 'knowledge-prizes' I distributed were awarded to people who work for the Office of Financial and Insurance Services! Recipients: **Curt Wallace, Sandy Rondebush, Dawn Kobus** and Audrey. I don't know if there is something special in the water treatment provided to 611 West Ottawa or if you are simply extraordinarily fortunate to have individuals of this caliber reporting to you. Whatever the case, I admire their work ethic and know that the State benefits mightily from it."

The Consultation, Education and Training Division (CET), Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA), received this note from the Howell Chamber of Commerce: "We could not let another day go by to say how much we appreciate the presentation of 'Electrical Safety' **Richard Zdeb** and **Ruth Hindman** did for the SafetyNet. It was both interesting and informative and injected with just the right amount of humor to keep us smiling. SafetyNet and Howell Area Chamber of Commerce are very proud of our association with the CET Division, and hope it will continue, especially with such dedicated and skilled field representatives." (The Howell Chamber works with Consultant **Karen Odell**.)

James Brogan, manager, Employee Discrimination Section, General Industry Safety and Health Division, MIOSHA, recently received a letter from Iowa Workforce Development, thanking Jim for sending MIOSHA anti-discrimination materials. The letter says, in part, "You are the only state that responded with actual materials, and quickly, and I am very grateful for your effort."

MIOSHA has received two letters from Dr. Marlene Caroselli, Center for Professional Development, commending two staff members. Dr. Caroselli had made a presentation on "Memory Tips for the Forgetful" at the last MIOSHA meeting. She had begun her program with a test of spatial memory. Her letter states, in part: "Your employee, **Todd Strong**, was the first person to raise his hand and share his answers to the three spatial problems. And the answers were all correct! His reward: this letter to you, commending his remarkable cognitive powers. Please join me in commending his intelligence, perseverance, and willingness to accept a challenge. You are fortunate indeed to have someone with his superior cognitive power on your staff."

The second letter commended **David Blane**. Dr. Caroselli had issued the class a challenge: anyone who could correctly repeat an extremely long string of numbers would have a letter written to the senior person in the agency, commending his remarkable

brain power. The letter states, in part: "Clearly, David Blane is not 'most people.' He committed to memory all 25 digits in the correct order — in a very short period of time. Please join me in commending David's intelligence, perseverance, and drive toward excellence."

Jim Dykes, construction consultant with the CET Division, MIOSHA, recently received a note of thanks from Robert Kenyon, Jr., president of Robert Kenyon & Sons, Inc., for the training Jim provided. The note says, "Thanks again for the Construction Safety Training that you provided for our employees. It was very good and informative. We are looking forward to your next training session."

Jaye N. Shamsiddeen, bureau director, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, received this letter from Phil Porter, director, Mackinac State Historic Parks: "On behalf of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, I want to express our appreciation for the tremendous assistance provided to our parks by the staff and students of the **Michigan Career and Technical Institute's Grounds Maintenance and Landscaping program**. Under the leadership of **Bob Vaccaro**, the team successfully completed many tasks during their week-long work program at Mackinac Island and Michilimackinac state parks. Their work helped us open our parks and historic sites in a timely manner with quality results. I can't tell you how much I appreciate this kind of support during these tight budget times. Based on comments from the MCTI staff, the project was also a great opportunity for the students who had the opportunity to practice many of the skills that they had learned at school. I am pleased to report that our park managers have hired four of the MCTI students and they have proven to be excellent employees. It is my sincere hope that we can continue this cooperative program that provides mutual benefit for both organizations."

This note was sent to **Debby Forsyth**, receptionist at the Battle Creek office of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS): "Just a short note to tell you how appreciative I am that you are in the MRS office. You are always so helpful and friendly. I never hesitate to request anything I might need. You always make me feel welcome and never awkward about how hard it is for me to maneuver around your office. It is a wonderful thing to be treated with dignity. And you do just that."

Sharon Howell in the cosmetology, barber, and appraiser licensing unit of Commercial Services received an e-mail from a customer she had assisted in renewing his appraiser license. He said, "Please pass this hearty thank you to everyone involved with processing continuing education requirements and license renewals. ... My sincerest thanks to everyone involved for your hard work!"

Back to the '50s with Commercial Services

The Bureau of Commercial Services held a DLEG Rocks! picnic with a '50s theme on Friday, July 22. Staff from Detroit, Lansing and Grand Rapids as well as a number of DLEG executives joined the Okemos staff on the lawn at Woodlake Circle in Okemos.

The picnickers enjoyed hot dogs, hamburgers, and '50s music by Chris Knight of Blue Sky Audio Productions. Yvette Robinson served as MC for the event and also entertained the crowd with her timely rendition of "Summertime."

A number of employees dressed up in '50s costumes. Winners of the costume contest were Susan Hensley and Jeannine Benedict in their poodle skirts and Tracy Goss and Cathy Jenks in their more casual outfits.

Other winners were Dena Goodman, Lola Rivera and Rick Hernandez, karaoke contest; Susan Hensley, Cathy Jenks, Judy Chapman and Rick Hernandez, dance contest; and Lindsay Moyer, hula hoop contest.



Cathy Jenks and Tracy Goss model their '50s threads.

UIA Has Record Blood Drive

By Valerie Congdon, Unemployment Insurance Agency

On July 7, the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) in Detroit hosted its most successful blood drive ever! Only days earlier, the Red Cross had declared a blood emergency. UIA staff and others rolled up their sleeves and answered the call in a BIG way by donating 52 pints of life-saving blood.

The one-day drive attracted UIA staff and other state employees at Cadillac Place and the Fisher Building, along with some members of the general public. There were 42 pre-made appointments, exceeding the appointment goal of 30. There were also 23 unscheduled walk-ins. The 52 pints of donated blood will help 156 area patients!

Everyone who attempted to donate was given a Red Cross baseball cap, a commemorative pin and their choice among general admission tickets to several area attractions. And, of course, there were the cookies.

Many thanks to those who donated or attempted to donate! You should be proud to know that you have contributed to the health and well being of the Detroit area's sick and injured. Thanks to your caring and commitment, many lives are being saved daily.



Brian Wotta with Internal Benefits at UIA can still manage a smile while donating blood.



Making Children Happy

Five Unemployment Insurance Agency employees spent the weekend July 16 and 17 volunteering at the Common Ground Music Festival in Lansing. Working various shifts from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., they spent the two days making children happy with fun activities. The volunteers were, 1. to r., Shemin Blundell, Grand Rapids; Mark Williams, Lansing; Cindy Curtis, Lansing; Ken McDonald, Lansing; and Dudley Williams, Lansing. This is the third year Cindy has volunteered, and she decided to recruit some of her co-workers. All had a good time and are willing to come back next year to do it again!